

VZCZCXRO6159
RR RUEHMA RUEHPA
DE RUEHNM #1013/01 3620750
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 280750Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5539
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1714
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 NIAMEY 001013

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/W, AF/RSA AND DRL; PLS PASS USAID/AFR/W
ACCRA FOR USAID/WA
PARIS FOR AF WATCHER
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [NG](#)

SUBJECT: NIGER: POSITION PAPERS REQUESTED; WARRANTS
REMOVED; LAND BORDERS CLOSED FOR DECEMBER 27 LOCAL ELECTIONS

REF: A. NIAMEY 1011

[B](#). NIAMEY 1009

[1](#)1. (U) Summary. The ECOWAS Mediator for the Niger political crisis requested a meeting with Ambassador Allen on the evening of December 24 to provide an update on the negotiations between the Government of Niger (GON) and Opposition. The Mediator requested both negotiation teams to prepare a position paper by December 26. He informed both parties that talks are scheduled to resume on December 29. The GON Minister of Justice reissued warrants against three Opposition leaders, but they again were removed by the GON Prime Minister. In preparation for local elections, the GON closed all land borders for Sunday, December 27. End summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) ECOWAS Mediator Abdulsalami Abubakar contacted Ambassador Allen on December 24 and asked that she meet with him later in the day to discuss the current status of the political negotiations in Niger. He noted he also would meet with the European Union (EU) senior representative (Note: The EU Ambassador is not in country. End note.) on the current state of affairs. Abubakar expressed disappointment that both the GON and Opposition negotiation teams had yet to move from their respective initial positions, consequently he had been unable to draft an agenda for the talks. He added that he asked both sides whether they could at least identify the points on which they disagree and they arrived at the following: a) the referendum that established the Sixth Republic, b) the dissolution of the Constitutional Court, c) the dissolution of the National Assembly and, d) the three-year bonus for President Tandja that extends his time in office to 2012. He reported that President Tandja insists he has not taken any illegal actions, thus has been unwilling to offer any concessions. The Mediator believes international pressure has helped keep the GON negotiation team at the negotiating table.

[1](#)3. (U) In an attempt to advance the dialogue between the GON and the Opposition, Mediator Abubakar tasked both sides to prepare a position paper for delivery to him by Saturday, December 26. He would then take two days to study the papers and resume the talks on Tuesday, December 29.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Ambassador passed to the Mediator the USG message that we have been impressed with his efforts and ECOWAS' resolve in handling the Niger political crisis. She emphasized that the USG continues to support his and ECOWAS' efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully. The Mediator stated his appreciation for USG support and added that he had heard the news reports about USG sanctions, including visa restrictions for certain supporters of Tandja's extension in

office. Ambassador then inquired whether ECOWAS planned to retract its statement of non-recognition of Tandja's presidency, as the GON had suggested, and the Mediator responded that he had informed the GON negotiators that the ECOWAS statement was nothing new, and consistent with statements made prior to December 22 (the end of Tandja's mandate under the 1999 Constitution). Thus, he suggested to the GON team that the ECOWAS statement was an insufficient reason to walk away from the table and, subsequently the talks were resumed.

¶5. (SBU) Ambassador inquired about the re-issuance of warrants for three Opposition leaders (Hama Amadou, Mahamadou Issoufou and Mahamane Ousmane). The Mediator responded that the warrants again had been removed. He reported that GON Minister of Justice Garba Lompo had re-issued the warrants without any authority to do so. Consequently, Prime Minister Ali Bado Gamatie removed the Justice Minister from the GON negotiation team.

¶6. (SBU) The Mediator mentioned that when he raised the possibility of new National Assembly elections, members of the Sixth Republic National Assembly have inquired whether they would receive refunds for any funds spent on the October election. He also inquired whether it would be acceptable to establish a transitional National Assembly, such as adding the members from the dissolved Fifth Republic National Assembly to the Sixth Republic National Assembly, and an inquiry was raised as to how the GON would pay the salaries of a larger transitional National Assembly.

¶7. (U) Ambassador inquired whether the GON negotiating team

NIAMEY 00001013 002 OF 002

had offered to postpone the December 27 local elections. The Mediator responded that the GON had insisted it will go forward with local elections as scheduled. (Note: On December 26, the GON announced the closure of land borders on December 27 due to the local elections. This is consistent with past practice to secure the land borders during elections. End note.)

ALLEN